

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Investigation on the
Commission's Own Motion into
Methodology for Economic Assessment of
Transmission Projects.

FILED
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
JUNE 30, 2005
SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE
INVESTIGATION 05-06-041

ORDER INSTITUTING INVESTIGATION

I. Summary

We open this investigation to consider the appropriate methodology for assessment of the economic benefits of transmission projects within our jurisdiction. This investigation will be coordinated, to the extent appropriate, with Application (A.) 05-04-015, in which Southern California Edison Company (SCE) seeks a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for the Devers-Palo Verde No. 2 (DPV2) transmission line project.

This investigatory proceeding is opened to allow the Commission to consider principles and methodologies for evaluating the economic benefits of transmission projects, including DPV2, which are submitted for Commission approval. We will consider, in particular, the California Independent System Operator's (CAISO) Team Economic Assessment Methodology (TEAM), both as an evaluative framework and as applied to assess the economic benefits of the DPV2 project. This inquiry will in no way delay our timely assessment of DPV2.

This new investigation will subsume issues previously under consideration in Investigation (I.) 00-11-001 regarding the economic evaluation of transmission lines. We plan to address other areas of inquiry pending in

I.00-11-001 through separate orders and to close that proceeding in the near future.

II. Background

In Decision (D.) 01-10-070 issued in 2001 in I.00-11-001, the Commission recognized that traditional methods are inadequate for assessing the economic benefits of transmission upgrades proposed to make less expensive power available to ratepayers. At the Commission's request, the CAISO began to develop a generic methodology and analytical tools for economic evaluations of transmission projects in dynamic market conditions.¹ In D.01-10-070, the Commission directed that the CAISO's economic methodology be filed upon completion and that evidentiary hearings then be held on the economic need for new transmission to the Southwest.²

On January 22, 2004, the Commission opened Rulemaking (R.) 04-01-026 to consider proposals to streamline the transmission planning process for investor-owned utilities. In that rulemaking, we anticipated, among possible changes to the transmission planning process, that approval of an economic methodology in I.00-11-001 could allow the Commission to rely on the CAISO's

¹ Factors affecting the cost-effectiveness of transmission projects in a restructured electricity market that are not reflected in traditional production-cost simulations include strategic bidding behavior, the effect of transmission upgrades on market competitiveness, and the treatment of congestion costs in the market design.

² With dynamic evaluation methodologies in development, we have assessed the economic benefits of proposed transmission projects, including the Valley-Rainbow project (A.01-03-036) and the Miguel-Mission project (A.02-07-022), using production-cost modeling.

assessment of need, following Commission validation in a certificate proceeding of the CAISO's application of the methodology.³

The CAISO submitted testimony in I.00-11-001 on June 2, 2004, setting forth its general TEAM approach.⁴ For evaluative purposes, the CAISO applied its methodology in a transmission feasibility study of Path 26, consistent with direction provided by the assigned administrative law judge (ALJ). At a subsequent prehearing conference (PHC), it was discussed that the CAISO's submitted economic methodology was undergoing revisions and had not been approved by the CAISO's Board of Governors. Commission staff held a workshop on the CAISO's economic methodology on July 15, 2004, and parties were given an opportunity to file comments on the staff's workshop report.

In A.05-04-015, SCE states that its evaluation of DPV2's economic benefits is consistent with the CAISO's TEAM approach.⁵ The CAISO approved the DPV2 project on February 24, 2005. In considering SCE's request, CAISO staff performed an independent economic assessment of DPV2 using its TEAM approach.⁶ Both SCE and the CAISO concluded that the DPV2 project would

³ A pending Draft Decision would close R.04-01-026. Closure of that rulemaking would have no material impact on this investigation.

⁴ The CAISO's June 2004 TEAM report is available on-line at <http://www1.caiso.com/docs/2004//06/03/2004060313241622985.pdf>.

⁵ SCE's economic analysis of the DPV2 project is contained in Appendix G to the Proponent's Environmental Assessment SCE submitted in A.05-04-015.

⁶ The CAISO's analysis of DPV2 is available on-line at the following sites: <http://www.caiso.com/docs/2005/02/02/200502022104311761.pdf> and <http://www.caiso.com/docs/2005/02/03/200502031659448693.pdf>.

bring economic benefits to ratepayers whose transmission facilities are under the operational control of the CAISO.

III. Preliminary Scoping Memo

Rule 6(c)(1) of the Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure (Rules) provides that an order instituting investigation (OII) “shall attach a preliminary scoping memo” and that the Assigned Commissioner shall rule on the scoping memo after the PHC, if one is held.

This investigation will consider issues related to the assessment of the economic benefits of transmission projects, not just for DPV2 but for other transmission projects that may come before the Commission. We will take this opportunity to examine basic principles applicable when assessing transmission projects proposed for their economic benefits. This general inquiry will be enhanced by the opportunity to apply suggested principles to the DPV2 project proposed in A.05-04-015. Our investigation, to be undertaken while an environmental assessment of the DPV2 project is underway, will not delay but rather will assist in prompt resolution of A.05-04-015.

We expect that the scope of the investigation, to be coordinated with A.05-04-015, may encompass some issues specific to an economic assessment of the DPV2 project, in addition to broader areas of inquiry of more general applicability. Thus, our identification of issues is preliminary at this time.

The scope of this proceeding shall include, but not be limited to, the following issues:

- What general principles or methodologies should be employed in assessing the economic benefits of transmission projects within the Commission’s jurisdiction?
- Is the CAISO’s TEAM approach a reasonable methodology for assessing the economic benefits of transmission projects?

- What validation is needed by the Commission in order to rely on a CAISO assessment of need in a Commission transmission project certification proceeding? If the Commission determines in a transmission project certification proceeding that a CAISO assessment of need has been adequately validated, are there additional requirements that must be met in the Commission's determination of economic benefits? For those transmission project certification cases where there is no validated CAISO assessment of need, what requirements should the Commission adopt for consideration of economic benefits?

We expect that the Assigned Commissioner may refine the issues to be addressed when ruling on the scoping memo after the PHC.

IV. Category of Proceeding and Need for Hearing

Rule 6(c)(1) provides that an OII "shall determine the category and need for hearing." Consistent with the categorization of A.05-04-015, this investigation is categorized as a Ratesetting proceeding, as that term is defined in Rule 5(c). It is expected to require a hearing. This order, only as to category, is appealable no later than 10 days after the date of this order, under the provisions of Rule 6.4. In response to this order, parties may state any objections to the order regarding the need for hearing, issues to be considered, or schedule in PHC statements, to be filed in response to the direction of the Assigned Commissioner or ALJ.

V. Schedule

The schedule in this investigation will be set in coordination with that of A.05-04-015. We anticipate that a joint PHC will be held in the near future in order to address schedule, scope, and other issues related to the two proceedings. A ruling will provide notice of the PHC and will provide for the filing of PHC statements.

This proceeding will conform to the statutory case management deadline for ratesetting matters, set forth in Pub. Util. Code § 1701.5. The Assigned Commissioner will provide more guidance on this point in the scoping memo to be issued following the PHC.

VI. Parties and Service List

In this investigation, we may adopt principles to be applied in certificate proceedings in addition to A.05-04-015. As a result, it is important that parties that may not otherwise participate in A.05-04-015 be involved in this investigation. To this end, we name as Respondents Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E), in addition to SCE. The CAISO's participation will be essential to our ability to assess its TEAM approach. We also encourage the California Energy Commission to participate in this investigation.

The Commission's new electronic service rules shall apply to this proceeding. Parties serving documents in this proceeding shall follow Rules 2.3 and 2.3.1. Any documents served on the ALJ and Assigned Commissioner's office shall be both by e-mail and by delivery or mailing a paper format copy of the document.

The temporary service list for this proceeding, based on the service lists for I.00-11-001 and R.04-01-026 and the temporary service list for A.05-04-015, is appended to this order as Attachment A and shall be used for service until a service list for this proceeding is established following the PHC.

The temporary service list will be replaced after the PHC; persons wanting to be included in the service list should take additional steps even if their names are on the temporary service list. Persons who want to become a party to this proceeding should appear at the PHC and fill out an appearance form.

Persons who do not want to be parties and only want notice of the hearings, rulings, proposed decisions, and decisions may either appear at the PHC or the evidentiary hearing and fill out an appearance form, or may send a request to the Commission's Process Office, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, California 94102 (or ALJ_Process@cpuc.ca.gov) asking to be added to the Information Only portion of the service list.

Those persons employed by the State of California who are interested in this proceeding may be added to the State Service portion of the service list by appearing at the PHC or the evidentiary hearing and filling out an appearance form or by sending a request to the Commission's Process Office requesting that they be added to the State Service portion of the service list. All of the names appearing on the State Service portion of the service list shall be served with all documents that parties may submit or file in connection with this proceeding.

The Process Office shall develop a service list based on the appearances at the first PHC and other requests received by the time of the PHC. This service list shall be posted on the Commission's Website, www.cpus.ca.gov, as soon as it is practicable. Parties should notify the Process Office of any address changes or if they wish to be removed from the service list. Any other problems or questions about the service list after it is posted on the Commission's Website should be brought to the attention of the assigned ALJ. The service list will be updated in accordance with the described procedures.

Any party interested in participating in this investigation who is unfamiliar with the Commission's procedures should contact the Commission's Public Advisor's Office in Los Angeles at (213) 649-4782 or in San Francisco at (415) 703-2074, (866) 836-7875 (TTY – toll free) or (415) 703-5282 (TTY), or send an e-mail to public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov.

VII. Ex Parte Communications

This proceeding is subject to Pub. Util. Code § 1701.3(c), which prohibits *ex parte* communications unless certain requirements are met (see also, Rule 7(c)). In addition to specifying the standards relevant to *ex parte* communications, Rule 7(c) requires parties to report *ex parte* communications as specified in Rule 7.1.

Therefore, **IT IS ORDERED** that:

1. The Commission hereby institutes this investigation on its own motion to examine the principles and methodology for assessing the economic benefits of transmission facilities within the Commission's jurisdiction.
2. This investigation shall be coordinated with Application (A.) 05-04-015, for the purposes of taking evidence and entering orders addressing methodologies for assessment of the economic benefits of transmission projects within the jurisdiction of the Commission.
3. Southern California Edison Company, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and San Diego Gas & Electric Company are Respondents to this proceeding.
4. Issues under consideration in Investigation (I.) 00-11-001 regarding the methodology for assessment of the economic benefits of transmission projects are subsumed in this investigation, and the record on these issues developed in that proceeding is fully available for consideration in this proceeding.
5. This proceeding is classified as Ratesetting, as that term is defined in Rule 5(c) of the Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure (Rules). This order, only as to category, is appealable no later than 10 days after the date of this order, under the provisions of Rule 6.4.
6. This proceeding shall require a hearing. In response to this order, parties may state any objections to the order regarding the need for hearing, issues to be

considered, or schedule in prehearing conference statements, to be filed in response to the direction of the Assigned Commissioner or administrative law judge (ALJ).

7. The Executive Director shall cause this order instituting investigation (OII) to be served on the Respondents, the California Energy Commission, the California Independent System Operator, the service lists for I.00-11-001 and Rulemaking 04-01-026, and the temporary service list for A.05-04-015.

8. The temporary service list is appended as Attachment A to this OII and shall be used for service of all pleadings until a service list for this proceeding is established. An initial service list for this proceeding shall be created by the Commission's Process Office and posted on the Commission's Website (www.cpuc.ca.gov) as soon as it is practicable after the first prehearing conference. Parties may also obtain the service list by contacting the Process Office at (415) 703-2021.

9. Parties serving documents in this proceeding shall comply with Rule 2.3 and Rule 2.3.1 regarding electronic service. Any documents served on the Assigned Commissioner and ALJ shall be both by e-mail and by delivery or mailing a paper format copy of the document.

10. Persons interested in this proceeding shall follow the procedures described in this OII to get on the service list.

This order is effective today.

Dated June 30, 2005, at San Francisco, California.

MICHAEL R. PEEVEY
President
GEOFFREY F. BROWN
SUSAN P. KENNEDY

DIAN M. GRUENEICH
Commissioners

Commissioner John A. Bohn, being
necessarily absent, did not participate.

ATTACHMENT A: Service List

JUNE 30, 2005

A.05-04-015/

I.00-11-001/R.04-01-026

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